

The IDVA Update



Mitch Daniels - Governor
Tom Applegate - Director

February 2007

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

Winter Edition

Lt. Governor Skillman Visits VA Medical Center



PHOTO LEFT: Dr. Andrea Conti talks about the Roudebush VA Hospital's polytrauma unit with Lt. Governor

October 13, 2006 - A Visit to Roudebush VA Hospital

“Some of the greatest moments I share as Lt. Governor are those I spend with Hoosier veterans. They always make me proud to not only be a Hoosier, but an American, too.

“Last Friday, I visited my friends at the Roudebush VA Hospital in Indianapolis. I was there in 2004, and I was glad to be back to tour the new polytrauma unit. This unit is designed to help today's veterans, many of whom have served in Iraq, recover from their injuries. From the new fitness center to the modern, comfortable lounge area, I saw how the patients will benefit from this specialized care.

“Finally, I got to enjoy the best part of my visit—meeting with the patients. As I spent time in the physical therapy room talking with soldiers, I was impressed again with their service to our state and country, and with the quality of care the staff at Roudebush VA Hospital provide.

“Our Hoosier veterans are making a sacrifice for all of us, and I am proud that we have a facility like Roudebush VA Hospital so we can better care for them at home.”

Lt. Governor Becky Skillman

Support Our Troops License Plate makes its debut



Editor's note: Additional information about BMV specialty plates. In 2005 (latest year for which statistics available), the BMV distributed 313,809 specialty plates. There are 68 specialty plates available. The most popular in 2005 were Heritage Trust (63,685 plates); Children's Trust (45,640); Hoosier Veteran (33,388); Indiana University (32,465); Purdue University (23,288). The BMV has ordered nearly 10,000 Support Our Troops plates.

INDIANAPOLIS (December 28, 2006)—Governor Mitch Daniels today unveiled the Support Our Troops license plate, which will be available to Hoosiers statewide beginning January 2. Proceeds generated from the sale of the plate will be placed into a fund supporting Indiana National Guard and reservist families.

“This is just one more small way we can honor Hoosiers who serve our country and help the family members who support them every day,” said Daniels.

Proceeds from the sale of the Support Our Troops plate will go to the Military Family Relief Fund. The cost of a specialty plate is \$40.75. Of that, \$20 will go

to the Military Family Relief Fund. Plates will be available in all BMV branches in January.

The license plate was created as a part of Senate Enrolled Act 75, which also established the Military Family Relief Fund for Indiana National Guard members and Indiana armed forces reservists called into active duty after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Senator Mike Delph (R-Carmel) co-authored the legislation during the 2006 legislative session. He also helped design the license plate, which is being produced by PEN products, a division of the Indiana Department of Correction.

“Governor Daniels and the Veterans’ Affairs Commission are dedicated to our Hoosier men and women in uniform and their families,” said Sen. Delph. “The Support Our Troops license plate will help contribute much needed money into the Military Family Relief Fund, which will in turn support Hoosier soldiers and their families in times of need.”

In a set of 2007 legislative initiatives designed to help Hoosier veterans and military families, the governor has proposed that the state provide matching funds of up to \$350,000 annually for the Military Families Relief Fund. State funds would match all private contributions to the fund as well as revenue generated by the sale of the plate.

Photos from the announcement will be available later today at: <http://www.in.gov/gov/photo/index.html>

The new plate design can be viewed here: <http://www.in.gov/gov/images/SupportOurTroops.jpg>.

For more information, visit www.bmvexpress.in.gov.

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BMV media contact: Julie Fletcher, 317-233-2521, jfletcher@bmv.in.gov

Office of the Governor media contact: Jane Jankowski, 317/232-1622, jjankowski@gov.in.gov

Hoosier Korean War Veteran Laid to Rest



A funeral was held October 14 2006 for Army Cpl. Charles Edward “Buddy” Sizemore. Cpl. Sizemore was originally listed as KIA Nov. 2 1950. Through a Joint Recovery Operation in North Korea in 2000, the remain of Cpl Sizemore were found and they were then verified through DNA tests. Cpl. Sizemore was from Rushville, Indiana.

World War II Veterans Receive French Legion of Honor



In a solemn ceremony at the Indiana War Memorial on Veterans Day 2006, Saturday, November 11, four World War II veterans were presented with the prestigious Legion of Honor Medal by Alain Weber, Honorary French Consulate, Indianapolis.

Mr. Porter enlisted in the Army at age 20 and participated in several campaigns including Southern France and Eastern France where he demonstrated a

(Continued on page 3)

remarkable sense of duty. For these achievements he received the Purple Heart Medal and the Bronze Star Medal.

Mr. Earl Kreinhop enlisted in 1943 at the age of 22. He served in the 12th Infantry Division and participated in the Normandy, Northern France and Eastern France Campaigns. He was wounded in Normandy on June 11, 1944.

Win Pulsifer enlisted in 1943 at the age of 20. He participated in the Ardennes and Eastern France Campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge.

Frank Chamber Jr. enlisted in the Army at age 19 and was a member of the 735th Tank Battalion attached to the 5th Infantry Division, 3rd Army. The 735th Tank Battalion spearheaded the Liberation of France from Angers to Metz.

The French Legion of Honor was first introduced by Napoleon. Author Victor Hugo was a notable recipient of the award.

veteran, the type of insurance, and the length of time the policy has been in force.

The dividends come from the earnings of a trust fund into which veterans have paid insurance premiums over the years, and are linked to returns on investments in U.S. government securities.

VA officials caution veterans about a long-running scam in which various groups charge fees to "locate" veterans who are eligible for the dividends. Veterans eligible for the dividends have had VA life insurance policies in effect since they left the military and have received annual notifications from VA about the policies.

Dividends are paid each year to veterans holding certain government life insurance policies and who served between 1917 and 1956.

World War II veterans holding National Service Life Insurance ("V") policies comprise the largest group receiving 2007 insurance dividend payments. They are expected to receive total payments of \$286.3 million.

An additional group of World War II era veterans, those who have Veterans Reopened Insurance ("J", "JR" and "JS") policies, will in total receive dividends of \$10.1 million.

Korean War era veterans who have maintained Veterans Special Life Insurance ("RS" and "W") policies can expect to receive dividends totaling \$71.6 million.

Dividends totaling \$1 million will be paid to veterans who served between World War I and 1940 and who hold U.S. Government Life Insurance ("K") policies.

Veterans who have questions about their policies may contact the VA insurance toll-free number at 1-800-669-8477 or send an e-mail to VAinsurance@va.gov. They may also visit the Internet at www.insurance.va.gov.

Some Vets to Receive Insurance Dividend Payments

VA Secretary Nicholson: Some Vets to Receive Insurance Dividends Payments "Tangible Evidence" of Nation's Commitment WASHINGTON (Dec. 8, 2006) - More than a million veterans are in line to share \$369 million in annual insurance dividends during 2007, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"These dividends are tangible evidence of VA's continuing commitment to safeguard the interests of America's veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson.

VA operates one of the nation's largest life insurance programs, providing more than \$1 trillion in coverage to 4.5 million service members, spouses and children.

The dividend payments will be sent to an estimated 1.2 million holders of VA insurance policies on the anniversary date of their policies.

Sent automatically through different payment plans, the amounts will vary based on the age of the

VA Will Reimburse CLEP Test Fees

Active-duty military service members have had the opportunity to take funded CLEP exams since 1974. This benefit has now been extended to military veterans. If you are an eligible veteran, you can receive reimbursement from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for CLEP exams and fees, saving you time and money while you pursue a college degree.

Veterans can claim reimbursement for CLEP exams and exam administration fees under provisions of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-454), which enhances the education benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill. For more information about who is eligible for the CLEP benefit and how to submit a claim, please visit the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/testing.htm.

The VA web site instructs the veteran to send a signed note or a signed VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, stating that they are requesting reimbursement for the cost of a national test. Include a copy of the test results, and send it to the local VA Regional Office.

Information required includes the name of the test; the name of the organization offering the test; the date the person took the test; and, the cost of taking the test.

Other national test fees which are approved for VA reimbursement include:

SAT	DAT
LSAT	MAT
GRE	MCAT
GMAT	OAT
AP	PCAT
CLEP	TOEFL
ACT	DSST

State Approving Agency Corner



Graphic created by Vicki Baker

Reminder: GI Bill Benefits Aren't Just For College

On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Apprenticeship allows you to learn on the job, earn wages and receive a percentage of GI Bill educational benefits. These benefits can be paid for as little as 6 months of OJT. Some examples of OJT programs are: Police Officer, Fire Fighter, Corrections Officer, etc.

Change of OJT Policy: Salaried Public Employees Now Eligible

A recent policy change at the Federal VA level allows GI Bill-eligible salaried public workers to utilize their education benefits for On-the-Job/Apprenticeship training in their capacity as federal, state, city or county employees.

As a result of this policy change, the Indiana State Office of Medicaid has just been approved as a training location for beneficiaries of the GI Bill.

The two Medicaid job classifications recently approved are:

1. Manager, Regulated Program, and
2. Programmer-Analyst.

Many other job classification approvals are possible. What this means for GI Bill-eligible public-employees is that their job classification may qualify for VA OJT status and pay GI Bill benefits.

Latest rates for GI Bill monthly payments may be access at:

http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/rates.htm

If you are unsure of your GI Bill eligibility, please contact the VA Education Regional Office in St. Louis at 1-888-442-4551.

If you have any questions about the OJT program for public employees, please contact our office at the local IDVA SAA numbers below or toll free at 1-800-400-4520.

Indiana's State Approving Agencies

Representing the IDVA SAA Eastern/southeastern region is myself, Tim Maley and I can be reached at 317-232-3917. Northern Region is Ron Rousch at 317-232-3914 and for the Southern Region, please contact Mrs. Vicki Baker at 317-232-3916.

If you have questions concerning proprietary education (privately owned trade or vocational schools & institutions of higher learning) contact the Indiana Commission on Proprietary Education. Marsha Thornton at 317-232-1327 or Tara Adams at 317-234-3307, will assist you with these programs.

Thank you for your assistance and support of veterans' vocational and educational advancement.

For Your Information:

GI Bill Benefits Available to Reserve and National Guard Members

The Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves (MGIB SR), Chapter 1606, is available to members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Reserves, as well as the Army National Guard and the Air Guard.

Beside the MGIB SR, activated reserve and Guard Service Members (SM) have two other GI Bill options. The first gives those who serve continuously for 24 or more months on active duty, the option to pay into the GI Bill for active duty (Chapter 30). The second program, called the [Reserve Education Assistance Program \(REAP\)](#), Chapter 1607. REAP provides activated reserve and guard members up to 80 percent of the GI Bill for active duty (Chapter 30). This program is explained below.

The MGIB SR Chapter 1606 benefit is worth over \$10,000. This amount is based on the 2006 monthly full-time student payment rate of \$297 multiplied by the 36 month limit. This "payment rate" automatically increases on October 1 each year. You get the increase no matter when you became eligible or start using it.

MGIB SR Eligibility:

To be eligible for the MGIB SR you must meet the following criteria:

- Agree to a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve or Guard signed after June 30, 1985. If you are an officer, you must have agreed to serve six years in addition to your original obligation.
- Complete your initial active duty for training (IADT).
- Meet the requirement to receive a high school diploma or equivalency certificate before completing IADT.
- Remain in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit.

Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP)

REAP was signed into law on October 28, 2004 to provide over \$28,000 of GI Bill benefits for Activated Reservists.

REAP (Chapter 1607) is a Department of Defense/VA education benefit program designed to provide educational assistance to members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency (contingency operation)* as declared by the President or Congress.

The Federal Department of Veterans Affairs will administer the program and pay benefits from funds contributed by Department of Defense (DOD). However, the DOD and Department of Homeland Security determine eligibility.

Chapter 1607 benefits cannot be used with other VA educational benefits. You must make an irrevocable election choosing which program you want your military service to count towards. However, if you are eligible for a Chapter 1606 kicker (College Fund), you can still be paid that kicker while receiving Chapter 1607.

REAP benefits are potentially payable from December 9, 2001 (90 days after September 11, 2001) for persons who were serving on a contingency operation on September 11, 2001 and who were in school on December 9, 2001. The Department of Defense may provide further guidance as to the retroactive nature of this program.

Note: "Contingency operations" as defined in title 10 U.S. Code means "Military operations that are designated by the Secretary of Defense as an operation in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against opposing military force; or results in the call or order to, or retention on active duty of members of the uniformed services..."

GI Bill Kicker -- Also known as the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps College Funds

The GI Bill Kicker -- also known as the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps College Funds -- is an educational benefit that is added to your GI Bill. The kicker can increase your monthly GI Bill payment rate by as much as \$350 a month. This means that you can actually boost your regular GI Bill benefit value from \$37,000 to over \$71,000. The amount you receive is determined by a number of factors including when you enlisted, the length of your enlistment contract, the service you joined, the job you chose and where you chose to serve.

Note: The Air Force uses the term GI Bill Kicker to refer to the [GI Bill Buy-up](#) program, which is available to all active duty GI Bill participants.

The GI Bill Kicker is also available if you choose to join the reserve. You must meet the current requirements and accept the Reserve GI Bill to qualify. If you qualify for the Reserve GI Bill Kicker you could increase your Reserve GI Bill benefit to \$23,292.

The College Funds are only made available to you when you first enlist.

Remember, you can't get your GI Bill Kicker money without receiving the GI Bill. The kicker isn't a separate benefit, but an add-on to your GI Bill benefit

If you are unsure of your GI Bill eligibility, please contact the VA Education Regional Office in St. Louis at 1-888-442-4551.

VA Helping to Facilitate Less Expensive Prescriptions

The Department of Veterans Affairs is helping some veterans get generic prescriptions for half the VA price. Veterans in health care priority categories 4 through 8 normally must make an \$8 co-pay for drugs from the VA that might be available at the \$4 rate being offered by Wal-Mart Stores Inc., and Target Corp.

VA Deputy Undersecretary William Feeley has told VA providers they can write prescriptions that can be filled at any private-sector pharmacy. They cannot transfer the veterans' prescriptions directly to a private-sector pharmacy, but they can write new prescriptions if they meet state requirements and cancel existing VA prescriptions.

For the \$4 drugs available at Wal-Mart, visit <http://i.walmart.com/i/if/hmp/fusion/genericdruglist.pdf>,

for the Target drugs go to http://sites.target.com/images/pharmacy/pharmacy_4dollar_program_list.pdf

Women Overlooked For Post-Deployment PTSD

By [Rick Maze](#)

Staff writer Military Times

Every veterans' hospital should have a full-time manager for women's programs and every female service member should receive better post-deployment counseling about potential health issues, according to recommendations from a symposium on federal programs for combat veterans.

One particular concern is that because women don't serve in ground combat units, they may be overlooked for post-traumatic stress disorder, which can develop not just from serving in a combat zone but also from such factors as sexual harassment or sexual assault, according to conferees at the recent National Symposium for the Needs for Young Veterans.

Recommendations from the symposium, sponsored by AmVets, are being distilled into an action plan for legislative and regulatory change. The group met in a Chicago suburb in October, making recommendations that are expected to be included in a larger plan prepared for Congress to consider next year.

A former Army National Guard soldier's situation was cited as an example of the possible problems facing female veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Keri Christensen said she sees her 15-year career in the Wisconsin National Guard coming to an end because of a sexual harassment complaint she made in 2005 while in Kuwait.

Christensen, a member of the 158th Transportation Company, was recovering from a broken foot that had been run over by one of her unit's heavy vehicles, when a senior enlisted member began sexually harassing her, she said in an interview.

She filed a complaint, which led to her being arrested, charged with illegal consumption of alcohol, court-martialed and reduced in rank to E-4, she said.

Her enlistment is about to end, Christensen said, and she plans to get out, disillusioned with military

justice and suffering from physical and mental disabilities as a result of her 11 months in theater in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The only question, she said, is whether she will get an honorable, general or dishonorable discharge.

"We were all told, in formation, that anyone busted in rank in theater would get the rank back within one year. My one year came and passed in October, and I was told the rules had changed," she said.

Even worse, she said, is that the man she accused of sexually harassing her — whose name is not being used because her story could not be independently verified — has been promoted and is one of the people who would review her request to have her rank restored.

Christensen receives psychiatric care from the Department of Veterans Affairs to help her cope with the images of dead service members she saw at the morgue on a daily basis in Kuwait while isolated from her unit. She stayed there, mostly alone, while her allegations and the charges against her were investigated, she said.

The counseling, she said, involves her dealing with the sight of dead bodies and from the trauma she says she suffered when her superior made frequent references to her body parts and to the possibility of having sex with her.

Her case is one that shows a potential link between sexual trauma and post-traumatic stress, said a working group that discussed the issue at the symposium. The group suggested requiring sexual-assault response coordinators to brief service members prior to deployment; ensuring trained experts in sexual trauma are deployed with units; and setting up procedures so that any medical evidence of a sexual assault gathered by criminal investigators is also provided to service members.

Christensen, who is married and has a son, said she didn't get help. "The people who were supposed to be looking out for me didn't," she said. "Immediately after I filed a sexual harassment complaint, I was arrested in the middle of the night and charged with a violation of Article 1, the wrongful consumption of alcohol."

"I was isolated from my unit, and told by my platoon sergeant that if I persisted in the sexual harassment complaint that she would charge me with adultery," a charge she says was untrue. Her husband is not in the military and has been supportive throughout her ordeal, Christensen said.

Hoosier Women Veterans Conference to be Held



Mark your calendars, the first annual Hoosier Women Veterans Conference is scheduled to be held April 14, 2007 at the Indianapolis Government Center South Conference Center. All women on active duty and veterans are

invited to attend. There will be various topics presented. For a registration form and/or more information contact Kris Bertrand at 317-232-3921 or email her at kabertrand@dva.in.gov.

Woman Indiana National Guard Veteran awarded the Purple Heart



Star Report

An Indianapolis-area soldier was presented a Purple Heart this morning for injuries she received during a mortar attack in Ramadi, Iraq.

Army officials think she's the first female Indiana National Guard members to be wounded.

Spc. Heather Holden was hurt on April 16, 2006 at the Node Center Operation Area at Forward Operating Base Al Taqaddum Iraq when her unit came under fire. Authorities said 12 mortars were fired at Holden's unit.

A press release from the Indiana National Guard Office of Public Affairs said Holden received shrapnel wounds to her leg and arm



when a mortar round hit a wooden structure above her position. Holden is a member of Company A, 138th Signal Battalion.

Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger announced the presentation of the medal. "Our female soldiers are serving this country selflessly, bestowing their unique strengths on an organization remarkable for its diversity," Umbarger said in the press release.

Presentation of the Purple Heart and Combat Action Badge were made at the Greenfield Armory in Greenfield.

KEEPING THE PROMISE Benefits and Services for Former Prisoners of War

By Bill Young

POW Coordinator

Because benefits have changed over the years, the Indianapolis VA Regional Office and the VA Medical Centers would like to take steps to ensure that all former POWs and their surviving spouses are aware of benefits to which they are entitled to. We are also taking special efforts to process the claims of all former POWs quickly.

For purposes of disability compensation, Congress has recognized that certain diseases are associated with a Former POW's captivity. These are called presumptive medical conditions, and if a former POW is diagnosed as having one or more of these conditions to a degree of 10% disabling, VA presumes that it is associated with the POW experience. The presumption of association is made for seven conditions regardless of the length of captivity:

- Psychosis
- Dysthymic disorder, or depressive neurosis
- Post-traumatic osteoarthritis

☐ Any of the Anxiety States

☐ Cold Injury

☐ Stroke and complications

☐ Heart Disease and complications

If a former POW was interned for 30 days or more, the following additional diseases are presumed to be service-connected:

- ☐ Avitaminosis
- ☐ Chronic Dysentery
- ☐ Helminthiasis
- ☐ Malnutrition, including associated Optic Atrophy deficiency
- ☐ Peptic Ulcer Disease
- ☐ Beriberi
- ☐ Cirrhosis of the Liver
- ☐ Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- ☐ Pellagra and any other nutritional deficiency
- ☐ Peripheral Neuropathy, except where directly related to infectious causes

Following is a breakdown of former Hoosier POWs who have filed claims with the VA Regional Office:

FPOWS RATED AT

65 0% or who have never filed a claim!

34 10%

10 20%

20 30%

20 40%

25 50%

23 60

16 60% with IU

16 70%

27 70% with IU

13 80%

51 80% with IU

4 90%

77 90% with IU

72 100%

Applying for Benefits

If a former POWs has *never* applied for compensation for their service-connected injuries, diseases or illnesses they will need to complete and submit a VA Form 21-526, "Veterans Application for Compensation or Pension".

If an original claim has been previously filed then any communication such as a phone call, email to the Indianapolis VA Regional Office, or a letter may be accepted as a claim.

The applications can be delivered in person or mailed to:

Indianapolis VA Regional Office

575 North Pennsylvania Street

Attn: Bill Young/POW Coordinator

Indianapolis, IN 46204

In order to properly evaluate their health for purposes of disability compensation, former POWs should arrange for a POW protocol examination at the nearest VA Medical Center.

Is Special Assistance Available to Former POWs at the Indianapolis VA Regional Office?

The Indianapolis VA Regional Office has a coordinator for former POWs. Any former POW who needs special assistance should call Bill Young at 1-800-827-1000.

Note: This article is Part 1 of a two-part article.



Legislation of Interest for 2007

The following bills have been or will be submitted by State Senators and Representatives in the upcoming 2007 legislative session.

We encourage you to contact your state senator and representative to show support for the legislation you choose.

Senate Bills of Interest

SB 89 - Gold Star Mothers license plate.

SB 148 - National Guard \$100,000 death benefit for those who die on active duty.

SB 185 - Makes National Guard members eligible for workforce development job training priority.

SB 188 - Free State Fair admission for veterans and active duty personnel and their families.

SB 230 - Family 30-day military leave.

SB 290 - Modified the National Guard Tuition Supplement Program.

SB 480 - Governor Daniels' Veterans' Benefits initiative. (See Director's Comments)

SB 491 - Veteran's Burial Allowance. Extends county burial benefits to Coast Guard and Merchant Mariners.

House Bills of Interest

HB 1044 - Hoosier Veteran license plate revenue.

HB 1048 - Purple Heart license plate for surviving spouse.

HB 1057 & 1079 - Lifetime hunting, fishing and trapping license.

HB 1092 - Military family leave.

HB 1099 & 1369 - Property tax deduction. Provides WWI deduction to World War II and Korean War veterans.

HB 1131 & 1136 - Parking with POW plates.

HB 1148 - Resettlement bonus for OEF/OIF veterans.

HB 1208 - Tuition remission for active duty or National Guard members who suffer a service-connected disability.

HB 1345 - Veterans' affairs study group.



The Indiana Operation Iraqi Freedom/ Operation Enduring Freedom Memorial Wall

The following are casualties since the last Update



Oct. 3, 2006: Army Staff Sgt. Jonathan Rojas, 27, Hammond,

Was killed by a sniper while instructing other soldiers from the top of a tank in Baghdad. Rojas was a member of the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team based in Alas-



Oct. 15, 2006: Marine Sgt. Brock A. Babb, 40, Evansville,

Was killed by a roadside bomb in the Anbar province of Iraq. He was a member of a Marine Reserve unit based in Terre



Oct. 17, 2006: U.S. Army Pfc. Nathan J. Frigo, 23, Kokomo,

Was one of three soldiers killed in a roadside bombing in Baqubah, Iraq. He was a member of the 4th Infantry Division's 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team based in



Nov. 2, 2006: Lance Cpl. James Brown, 20, Owensville,

Was shot and killed while on patrol in the Anbar province. He was deployed with the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines from Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.



Nov. 22, 2006: Marine Lance Cpl. James R. Davenport, 20, Danville,

Was one of three soldiers killed in a roadside bombing in Anbar province. He was assigned to the III Marine Expeditionary Force based in Hawaii.



Dec. 26, 2006: Army Pfc. Joseph Allen Strong, 21, Boone County,

Was one of two soldiers who died of injuries received in a Humvee accident south of Baghdad. Strong was a member of the 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division.

Veterans Find New Life In Pizza



LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- The owners of franchise companies are helping war veterans become business entrepreneurs.

Robbie Doughty, of Kentucky, lost his legs in a roadside bombing in Iraq and was searching for a new life outside the Army when a call came from Michael Ilitch, the founder and owner of the Little Caesars pizza chain, offering a business proposition.

Did Doughty want to open a Little Caesars franchise? Doughty said he didn't hesitate a second before saying he'd do it. He and a business partner celebrated their pizza store's grand opening Thursday.

Since last November, any qualified, honorably discharged veteran can receive \$10,000 in discounts to become a Little Caesars franchise operator. Discounts for veterans with disabling injuries can reach \$68,000.

Besides Little Caesars, about 250 companies that belong to the International Franchise Association offer incentives to help veterans get set up in business.

For more information go to their web site at www.littlecaesars.com



Director's Comments

The 2007 Legislative Session has begun and there's a specific piece of legislation we should all be interested in. Governor Daniels' initiative for Veterans' Benefits is contained in Senate Bill 480.

SB 480 exempts active duty military pay earned by members of the National Guard and Reserves from individual income tax. This is not just the pay earned while they are in a combat zone, but includes pay earned during the entire duration of their active duty orders, to include mobilization and train-up time, as well as the decompression time after they return safely to their families.

The bill increases the military pay income tax deduction from \$2,000 to \$5,000. However, the taxpayer may not claim both the new exemption and the existing deduction for military income. Military retirees over age 60 may also claim the deduction.

The bill specifies that active duty military person

nel stationed in Indiana (there are many at Fort Benjamin Harrison and at Crane Naval Station, as well as active duty personnel assigned at the National Guard battalion-level and above) are eligible for resident tuition rates at Indiana educational institutions.

It expands the high school diploma program, previously offered only to World War I and World War II veterans, to include Korean War and Vietnam War veterans.

It authorizes the (1) advisory board of the division of professional standards of the department of education; and (2) various professional licensing boards; to adopt rules to expedite the licensure of individuals whose spouses are stationed on active duty in Indiana.

This bill has been endorsed by all the major veterans' service organizations (Legion, DAV, VFW, AMVETS) as well as the smaller organizations such as Purple Heart, MOAA, AFA, etc.

County Service Officers should contact their respective legislators and ask that they support this legislation. In addition, during your visits to the various Posts in your county, encourage Post leaders and members to do the same.